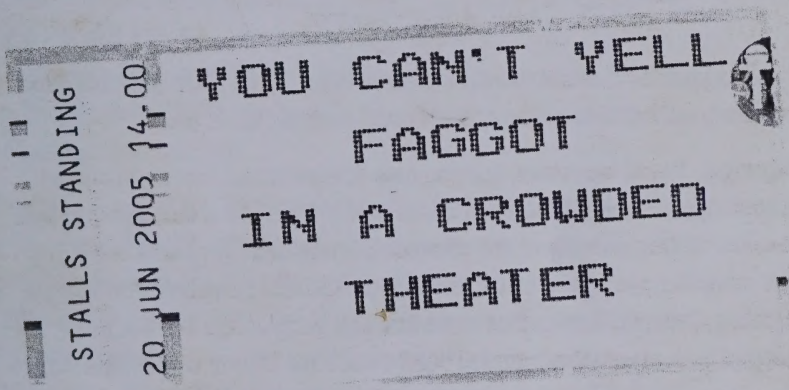
DON'T LABEL IT!

May 2009

The harbor of hate speech in the gay community.



Xanna Don't voices her opinion on why Atlanta's gay film festival, OUT ON FILM should be boycotted this month.

plus **MISSISSIPPI DAMNED** finds big screen redemption,

Melanie McDougald continues her quest for the meaning of **The L Word**,

and **Megan St. James** becomes learned in **Food 101**

New This Month: Your personal forecast—*What Would Xanna Don't?*

YOU CAN'T YELL FAGGOT IN A CROWDED THEATER

The harbor of hate speech in the gay community.

by Xanna Don't

Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover, Springfield, Massachusetts.
Dead. Age 11. Cause of death: suicide.
Jaheem Herrera, Decatur, Georgia.
Dead. Age 11. Cause of death: suicide.

It's unimaginable. Children taking their own lives. What could possibly drive elementary-school kids to feel and act upon such profound pain?

Language. It was incessant, bullying hate speech about perceived sexual orientation, something these two boys should have had the freedom and time to explore at their own pace. It's commonly known that gay teens are 2 to 3 times more likely to attempt suicide, but even GLSEN (Gay/Lesbian/Straight Education Network) begins their statistical gathering at age 13. We're ill-equipped to deal with these recent deaths because of their unthinkable nature.

On March 8, John Evans was brutally beaten in Midtown. At age 28, he literally had his teeth kicked out. Atlanta's gay community has been debating the virtues of this assault to determine if we can call it a hate crime. With no actual hate crime laws on Georgia's books, we must qualify it ourselves. I have. Easily. With one word: "faggot." John told media outlets, "They called me the f-word." It's moving that his southern gentility prevents him from saying it. He has a unique perspective on its hurtful power and he's right. We shouldn't allow it. But since that time, John has been repudiated in various blogs; because he was also robbed, people are audaciously questioning the merits of the crime perpetrated against him. John now says, "I feel the gay community is sometimes its own worst enemy. I have had to deal with other gay men telling me I got what I deserved. I just hope one day our community can really unite and join forces."

On December 3, the acting manager of The Plaza Theatre on Ponce DeLeon Avenue in Atlanta hollered "faggots" at two young gay African-American men, one of them a teenager, who arrived there by mistake. They'd driven all the way from Macon to see the film, "Noah's Arc: Jumping The Broom," playing a couple of blocks away. Their request for directions was spurned with hate speech. Luckily, tiona m, a Philadelphia-based African-American lesbian filmmaker, was sitting in the lobby during her documentary's showing there and overheard it. She was so incensed by what she heard and the theater owner's dismissal of the incident that she conducted her film's post-screening Q&A session on the cold, windy sidewalk outside. Fifty people stood with her, including my wife and me. Many of us had tears in our eyes. To date, no action has been taken against the offending employee, and the theater's owner, through public message boards, has alleged and alluded that the *three* gay people involved are liars.

On May 28, Atlanta's LGBTQ film festival, Out On Film, begins a weekend-long run at The Plaza Theatre. When asked to consider the verbal assault of December 3, the festival's new director didn't see a problem with awarding them this multi-thousand dollar booking, citing pleasant experiences renting their facilities in the past. But he's not spending his own money to do this; he's spending community money generated by our donations, sponsorships, volunteer efforts, and ticket purchases. Let him and Atlanta Film Festival, the straight-helmed financial funnel for Out On Film, know that this venue is unacceptable and that hate speech will not be tolerated nor financially rewarded in our community. The lives of our children may depend on it.

Atlanta Film Festival www.atlantafilmfestival.com 404-352-4225
tiona m Productions www.myspace.com/tionamproductions
Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network www.glsen.org
The Trevor Project www.TheTrevorProject.org
GLBT youth crisis 24-hour helpline: 866-4U-TREVOR.

To contact Xanna Don't: **DON'T LABEL IT!** dontlabelit@gmail.com

MISSISSIPPI DAMNED

Damned & Redeemed: Tina Mabry's Ascension To Cinematic Brilliance

by Xanna Don't

Mississippi Damned is fresh on the film festival circuit, but this tour de force has already won both the Jury Award for Best American Independent Film at **The Philadelphia Film Festival** and the Special Jury Award for Narrative Breakthrough at **The Atlanta Film Festival**. Scheduled to appear at many other major film festivals throughout the summer, this is the earliest of interviews with the woman behind it, writer/director **Tina Mabry**.

XANNA DON'T: *This is your first narrative film and you based it on your life growing up in Tupelo in the late 1980s and '90s. It's a brutally honest, challenging drama about a quest that you described at the film's post-screening Q&A in Atlanta as "escaping a mindset" and "creating a road when you don't have a map." Was it difficult to convey so much of your life within the scope of a film?*

TINA MABRY: It's an extremely difficult process trying to collapse a lifetime into two hours while aiming to create character arcs, plant plot points, and craft an emotionally engaging story. I tried to incorporate my entire past into the first draft because I wanted to address all of the major milestones that shaped who I am today. But I tried to tackle too many issues for a single script. The producer and editor, **Morgan Stiff**, was able to help me with its direction and intent. Her dramaturgical background was an asset as she helped me focus the story and fully develop the characters. From an emotional standpoint, it wasn't easy to write about what I had witnessed while growing up. The film brings tabooed issues to the forefront, which seems to construct a safe environment for many audience members to confess their family secrets. One audience member in Atlanta who returned for a second screening told me that after she and her aunt watched the film, they finally talked about the molestation that occurred in their family. It's gratifying to know that the film has allowed audience members to have an open dialogue and realize they have no reason to be ashamed.

"The film brings tabooed issues to the forefront."

Photos courtesy of Morgan's Mark

XD: *You confessed that the character of Kari, a young pianist with great potential, most resembles you, but conceded that some characters were composites for dramatic purposes. How much of you identifies with the character of Leigh, her much maligned, manic lesbian sister?*

TM: Leigh is based on my older sister, who had a difficult time growing up as a lesbian in Tupelo. She was treated like a pariah. I remember telling her that I was gay too, but she thought I was just a kid doing my best to make her big sister feel better. She didn't know that I was actually coming out to her.

XD: *With Morgan, you have formed your own production company, Morgan's Mark. You define your relationship as "partners professionally and personally." How do you balance the two relationships? Can you describe the dynamic of a lesbian couple creating films together?*

TM: It's always a challenge. There's a natural inclination to talk to each other on a personal level, which doesn't always translate well into the professional arena. When we work together, we constantly remind ourselves to interact as if we were merely co-workers, sometimes censoring ourselves by adjusting the way we phrase things to one another. In our personal life, we are candid and frank in our discussions, but that can pose a problem in our professional relationship. However, the beautiful thing about working with your partner is that you never have to worry about trust or honesty. We always know we have each other's best interest at heart and have the same goals. Morgan brings out the best in me.

"The beautiful thing about working with your partner is that you never have to worry about trust or honesty. Morgan brings out the best in me."

XD: *Many of your relatives depicted in the film saw it over the holidays, just before its January debut at Slamdance in Utah. Was it difficult for you to watch together as a family? Has it facilitated any healing with its truthfulness?*

TM: I was nervous and hesitant to show them the film. I didn't want to cause a rift because I chose to publicly reveal the dirt we swept under the rug. They knew I was writing the script and they knew we shot the movie, but I knew visually seeing the completed film would be different. Thankfully, they loved it. They were happy to know that the film was truthful and honest. Naturally, it was difficult to watch certain scenes and relive those moments. A few of my family members said seeing themselves portrayed onscreen was like having a

mirror held up to them for the first time. They were able to see themselves as they actually were which, by their own admission, helped them further understand the reasons behind their actions.

XD: *To produce the film, you took out loans in addition to the grants you received from Film Independent and Kodak. Within these financial constraints, you budgeted to pay everyone involved the same amount. Why did you make this amazing decision and how did it factor into the camaraderie on the set?*

TM: We didn't have a big budget, and we had to pay the actors according to SAG's (Screen Actors' Guild) Low Budget Agreement. While attending Film Independent's Producer's Lab, Morgan came up with the idea to pay the crew based on "most favored nations." We wanted to be fair. **Lee Stiff** (executive producer), Morgan, and I felt that everyone, from the production assistant to the director of photography, would be integral to the production of the film. It was imperative that everyone be paid the same because no one person was above another; we were all in the trenches together. As everyone became emotionally connected to the story, it was amazing to see people voluntarily step outside of their job descriptions to usher this film through production. I often hear directors use the phrase "my film" when, in my opinion, they should say "our film," because they didn't make it alone. I will forever be grateful to every single person who helped bring this film from a dream to fruition.

XD: *As the film continues to pick up steam and awards, where do you see it going?*

TM: After the film finishes its festival run, we hope to secure traditional distribution or self-distribute it. We aim to use cinema as a means to give marginalized people a voice and shed light on issues that may seem too hard to tackle. We will get this film in front of audiences in a theatrical setting, whether it is through a traditional or non-traditional route. The performances are too impactful, the filmmaking too strong, and the story too important to settle for less.

www.mississippidamned.com

encounters

May 7
Betty Harris
@ The Earl, ATL
myspace.com/
bettyharris

Lez Zeppelin
@ The Loft, ATL
myspace.com/lez
zeppelin

Photo by R Janus

May 7—9
City Skies Festival @
Kavarna, Decatur GA
myspace.com/
instantkavarna

May 8
The You Could Tell I Was
No DebuTAUNT Ball
with Jayne County
@ Manuel's, ATL
www.myspace.com/
libertineusa

May 13
Ruby Redd (pictured)
hosts a benefit for
Chris Kids ATL @
3-Legged Cowboy
3leggedcowboy.net

May 16
The Conditionals
@ Java Monkey,
Decatur GA
myspace.com/
theconditionalsmusic

Atlanta Roller Girls @
Yaarab Shrine Center
www.myspace.com/
atlantarollergirls

Hotlanta Softball
League's Camp
Pageant *with*
Ruby Redd (above)
& Mary Edith Pitts
@ Jungle, ATL
hotlantasoftball.org

May 17
ALHI's SPRING
FLING @
Callanwolde, ATL
thehealthinitiative.org

May 21
Fiona Simone @
Drunken Unicorn, ATL
myspace.com/
fionasimone

Magic Hat Beer Dinner
@ The Shed at
Glenwood, ATL
theshedatglenwood
.com

May 22
Jeremy Thornton @
Smith's Olde Bar, ATL
myspace.com/
jeremythornton

May 21—25
MondoHomo 2009 @
various venues, ATL
myspace.com/
mondohomosouth

May 22—25
Traxx Girls present
SizzleHer in Miami, FL
myspace.com/
traxxgirls

May 23
The Bridges, more... @ Decatur Arts Festival, Decatur GA
decaturartsfestival.com

May 27
The Atlanta Dream @ Phillips Arena
atlantadream.net

May 29
The Blacktop Rockets, Rod & The Rusty Rebels, *and* Night Driving In Small Towns @ Kavarna, Decatur GA
myspace.com/instantkavarna

Jennie McNulty & Vickie Shaw @ Unitarian Universalist Congregation, ATL
jenniemcnulty. com
*(see **short & tweet** on our back cover)*

May 30
Diane Durrett @ Bluebird Café, Nashville TN
dianedurrett.com

June 5
The Subliminator, Hotel Hotel, and Resident Patient @ Kavarna, Decatur GA
myspace.com/pdwilder

June 5—13
Riverbend Festival with B-52s, Siberia My Sweet, more... @ 21st Century Waterfront, Chattanooga TN
riverbendfestival.com

June 6
The Bridges @ Tasty World, Athens GA
myspace.com/thebridgesmusic

June 8
Ladies of Les Dames: Chefs Nathalie Dupree, Shirley Corriher, Rebecca Lang, Angie Mosier, Linda Harrell, Virginia Willis and Nancy Lutz, demonstration and tasting @ The Cook's Warehouse – Midtown, ATL
cookswarehouse.com

June 13
James Dean: A Decade of Pete @ The Seen Gallery, Decatur GA
www.petethecat.com

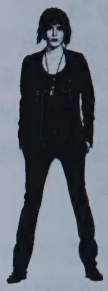
Jenny Madison @ Java Monkey, Decatur GA
myspace.com/jennymadisonmusic

June 16
Barry Brandon Squillace in a benefit performance for The Heart Foundation @ The Shakespeare Tavern, ATL
www.bshertfilms.com

Send your encounters to dontlabelit@gmail.com

WHAT THE L ??? part 2

by Melanie McDougald



Radio Announcer: We now return to our caller with break-up issues.
Caller: So what does this all mean? Why do I feel so lost? I need closure!
Doctor: But, I think that everything you need is already there. I think you need to listen to what you're saying yourself.
Caller: How can you say that when Jenny is dead and no one seems to be responsible?
Doctor: Why don't we back up a bit? Why might Jenny have these characteristics? Is she anything like Ilene Chaiken?
Caller: I do remember seeing in an interview that she identified with Jenny. Something about how Jenny is a writer, too, and how Ilene recalled her own coming out as messy and confusing like Jenny's.
Doctor: That's very interesting. What about when Jenny was making her film?
Caller: Oh yeah! Well, not only were the scenes for the most part exactly like scenes from Season 1 of the show, but with Jenny's spin. I remember one time when Jenny wanted to shoot LA for LA—that means…
Doctor: I know what that means
Caller: Well, shut my gay mouth, just trying to help.
Doctor: Funny, I thought that was what *you* needed.
Caller: I'm sensing some aggression, but anyway—So she wants to shoot LA for LA, but the studio says, "No, you have to shoot Vancouver for LA." But then Jenny's financier steps in and says, "Of course you can shoot LA for LA." But here's the weird part: The L Word *is* shot in Vancouver for LA. So even though Jenny wins out and Lez Girls gets shot in LA, it's actually shot in Vancouver for LA. I don't know if Chaiken wanted to shoot LA for LA, but isn't that strange? Jenny has more power to get what she wants, it seems.
Doctor: It definitely connects Jenny to Chaiken and seems to allude to Chaiken's own general experiences, if not actual experience. It's like a mobius strip—
Caller: A who?
Doctor: A mobius strip is a strip of paper whose ends are glued together in such a way that there is no inside or outside. Look it up. So for The L Word, Jenny connects the outside "real" world to the inside fictional world such that inside and outside, fiction and reality are not wholly separate from each other.
Caller: But why? What's the point? Especially, what's the point in Chaiken connecting herself to the character everyone hates?

Doctor: Why do you think?

Caller: Aren't you getting paid to answer questions, not ask them?

Doctor: Not nearly enough. Okay, you said Jenny was from the mid-west, right? Maybe Chaiken identifies with an outsider status. Or maybe she felt that having this kind of "every-lesbian" land in lesbian Oz, if you will, represented something important about how lesbians relate to each other.

Caller: Well, there were several times that someone said something like that—Max at the lobster dinner says something about how the female lobsters will pull each other down and Alice says something about how everyone knows that lesbians eat their own.

Doctor: Maybe Jenny represented a sense of frustration at how insular, how closed in the lesbian "community" can be? You can't see me doing the little finger quotes can you?

Caller: Um, non-visual medium here, so no I can't. Thanks for that.

Doctor: What became of Jenny's film? Was it a success?

Caller: Good granny, no! She stole the negatives.

Doctor: What? Why?

Caller: Because she's an evil psycho bitch from hell! Thank goddess Tina was able to parlay that into a bigger job in New York.

Doctor: What the—?

Caller: See, the studio takes over, or rather Jenny's assistant director, Adele, who does this total All About Eve takeover of Jenny's life, is made director and changes the ending so that the hets are happy. Jessie goes back to Jim, they change the name of the film, and Jenny and Tina, and everyone, really, are way ticked off. In the last episode, Shane finds the negatives hidden in the attic of Jenny's home, even though Jenny has been denying that she took the negatives all along.

Doctor: Maybe the integrity of the film was more important to Jenny than honoring obligations to unethical and profit motivated, heteronormative, homophobic Philistines.

Caller: Ummm, what?

Doctor: Don't you see how Chaiken is referencing not only the particular frustrations of lesbian filmmakers in straight Hollywood, but the venal and self-serving nature of the industry as a whole? What happens in All About Eve? Margot Channing is cheated out of her career, denied recognition of her accomplishments, and left behind by the flavor-of-the-month sensibilities of her creative community by that community and its blind support of a ruthlessly power-hungry Eve.

Caller: And your point is...?

Doctor: *sigh...*

To be continued...

TAKE YOUR PALATE TO SCHOOL AT **FOOD 101** IN MORINGSIDE

By Megan St. James

If English 101 had been anything like Ron Eyester's **Food 101**, maybe I also would have become a chef. Recently taking over complete ownership of the restaurant, Ron is able to fully showcase his self-taught skills creating foods that speak flavors.

To forget the rainy evening dampness, Jason and Jeff, the masterminds behind the bar, suggested "The Aviator," a blend of Aviation Gin and Lemon-Lavender juice with a splash of Crème de Cassis and fresh lemon. After two of these, I could have been back outside, singin' in the rain.

Lizzie, our delightful server, was on a mission to wow us with Ron's creations. To compliment them, she recommended the unfiltered 2007 Foris Pinot Noir from Oregon's Rogue Valley with bright Asian spices, cherries, raspberries and a slight earthy finish.

Ron has a focused passion on how fresh ingredients can play off each other. Tender, long-finned Point Judith Calamari showed sweet silky tastes; no sauce needed here, but pickled fennel and apricot curry took it to a higher level. Another crowd-pleasing appetizer is a southern thing like no other: pimento cheese, house-made with aged Tillamook Cheddar on Semolina toast points. Good stuff!

The off-menu juicy Blackjack Garden Beefsteak tomato salad with Cypress Grove's Midnight Moon Cheese and delicate White Anchovies (alici) showcased the freshest ingredients available. Arugula Salad from Woodland Gardens, married with smoky Benton's bacon, creamy goat cheese from Vermont, and red wine poached Seckel pears with a buttermilk corn dressing is totally mind-boggling.

Ron kicked it up with delicate Jonah Crab Cakes served over sweet corn chow-chow. Delectable seared Georges Bank U-10 scallops served with pineapple infused Carolina gold rice, smoky bacon, and a tomato glaze was perfection. His signature Wild Georgia Shrimp with Riverview Farm grits and tasty Andouille Sausage was over the top. Delicate flavors of sage and caramelized onions with Cremini mushroom's earthiness partnered well with Via Elisa Ravioli and Riverview Farm's braised pork shoulder. Lizzie took us to the limit when she delivered the perfect brunch slider, The Big Nasty: lightly fried Springer Mountain chicken, scrambled local egg, Benton's bacon, and melted cheddar cheese. Outrageous!

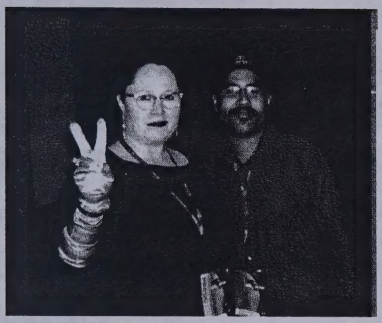
Tempting our taste buds with Ron's desserts was criminal. Chocolate Crepes filled with El Rey ganache were sinful; Homemade Belgian Waffles with Butter Pecan Ice Cream were sensual; and decedent Chocolate Bread Pudding was absolutely blissful.

The heartbeat of Food 101 in Morningside is Ron's rock 'n' roll approach to food—lively, energetic, and fun. With fresh, organic, sustainable food, Food 101 is waiting to take your palate to school at reasonable prices.

www.101concepts.com

more to be scene...

Atlanta Film Festival 2009



*The **Bellissima** Bunny! Maybe we shoulda ripped his ears off on Easter Sunday? Lately, his eyes follow me around the room!*

3-Legged Cowboy

DLJ

Personal Forecasts

MAY 2009

	What would Mma Makutsi do?	**What Would Xanna don't?**
TAURUS	Strive for short and concise communication in your pursuit of love during the month of May. It may not happen now. Be patient.	Don't sweat the big stuff! It's out of your hands. If you can't find your soul mate now, drink heavily with pals.
GEMINI	Focus on friends and family for meaningful interactions. Children are a precious gift to be nurtured and cherished.	Don't be pressured into that white picket fence. Babysit for a friend or simply behave like a child yourself.
CANCER	New beginnings are highlighted and most favoured; the early bird earning 97% in her class certainly wins the worm!	Don't tell Cancer not to live, just sit and putter. March your band out! It's your parade and there's no chance of rain.
LEO	After choppy waters and rip tides, smooth sailings glide for Leo by the second half of the month. Swift typing abounds!	Don't mind any sloppy footing in May's first two weeks; later, your cha cha steps lively. Len gives you a 10!
VIRGO	Work meticulously on the issues at present and finish all tasks thoroughly; clean your desk before accepting a new case.	Don't change horses in the middle of this stream. As we say in Texas, dance with the gal that brung ya!
LIBRA	While some facts are delayed, commit to that which looks promising; it is a good time to take an optimistic chance!	Don't hesitate to role the dice on a new opportunity; go ahead and blow on them. It could be worth the gamble.
SCORPIO	Attract promising and proper new prospects with a positive attitude; avoid negative former classmates with big titles.	Don't underestimate your luck; you've got a "je ne sais quoi" in May that is deliciously undeniable.
SAGITTARIUS	Prudently and cautiously accept new friends; take special care to fact check and ensure you've chosen the right ones.	Don't fall for any trite flash in the pan; you've got the wits and appeal to attract the coolest of people.
CAPRICORN	Practicality may be temporarily abandoned using a keen eye for the true heart. With faith, it is seen!	Don't beat yourself up if you get tipsy and blabber your true feelings; it's not like you, but it's gonna rock!
AQUARIUS	Carefully compose your letters to an intriguing prospect; much could be riding on your words.	Don't beat around the bush; express interest if you truly feel it. Spill your guts confidently.
PISCES	Enjoy your beautiful fluidity and give your usually keen perceptions time to flow. The water will clear next month.	Don't jump the damn gun. Wait. Wait. It'll happen. Relax, don't do it—when you wanna come…
ARIES	Seize the compatibility of a wondrous work or love relationship. Collaborations are favored. Unity produces great results.	Don't get in your own way being trifling. Go for it. Trust that it's truly scrumptious; chill and serve.

Anika Noni Rose appears as Grace Makutsi on ***The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency*** *www.hbo.com*

DON'T LABEL IT!

About us: *In the temporary print absence of Labrys Magazine, we are:* ***Don't Label It!*** *Previously published in the 1990's in* ***Austin, Texas****, it began as Xanna's band newsletter and evolved into a regional publication. Xanna has revived the concept of cross-pollinating on paper the worlds she's always lived in: the live music scene, film happenings, and the gay community. Within these pages, they co-exist in harmony, with guest food columnist, Megan St. James and Melanie McDougald's series on the meaning of "L." Thanx for picking us up!*

Melanie McDougald

Megan St. James

Xanna Don't

Don't Label It! is accepting advertisers for our June issue. For ad rates and a media kit, please send your inquiries to dontlabelit@gmail.com

www.dontlabelit.com

short & tweet

with Jennie McNulty

Jennie McNulty action figure not shown actual size.

DLI: Jennie McNulty, Your women's football team just won its first game! Where are you going now?

Jennie: I'm going to the Bahamas to do stand-up on an Olivia cruise!

DLI: What's the most fun thing about performing on Olivia cruise ships?

Jennie: Anytime hundreds of lesbians gather at sea, good comedy material is plentiful...!!! C'mon ladies, you know it's true!

DLI: In your web series, *Walking Funny With* at AfterEllen.com, you deceptively balance exercise with comedy!

Jennie: Yes! We're walking the whole time!!! PERFECT!! That's my plan to make it not even seem like exercise!!!

Don't miss Jennie in the ATL on MAY 29th with Vickie Shaw @ UUC www.jenniemcnulty.com

text message hell...

me (04/18, 5:39 pm): Did my friend sean ever call you? He said he may invite you to brunch.
sam (04/18, 5:42 pm): No. ☹
me (04/18, 5:45 pm): He is gunshy after a bad break-up. Give him time. He is a very sincere guy. ☺

me (04/20, 9:27 pm): I'm up to my bodacious ta-ta's in the film fest, so no cooking this week, no how. Besides, you owe me such a huge apology for chasing dicks on easter sunday!

steve (04/21, 12:57 am): I'M SOOOO SORRY ABOUT EASTER!

me (04/21, 4:07 pm): Just met allie (spelling?), your roomie! Are you coming out? Gay short films are at 9:30 pm.
chip (04/21, 4:20 pm): yes
me (04/21, 4:53 pm): I'm wearing a t-shirt that bruce designed, wherever he is...!

Forward your hellacious text messages to ***dontlabelit@gmail.com***.